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July 20, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi,

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) urges swift passage of H.R. 1599, the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015. This legislation will provide our farmers and value-added food producers with a uniform and science-based federal framework for their products while also providing additional information to the American consumer.

NASDA is a non-partisan, non-profit organization which represents the Commissioners, Secretaries, and Directors of the state departments of agriculture in all fifty states and four U.S. territories. State departments of agriculture are responsible for a wide range of programs including food safety, combating the spread of animal and plant diseases, and fostering the economic vitality of our rural communities.

NASDA members are generally supportive of state-based approaches to address challenging issues. However, the efforts recently to impose a patchwork of state and local policies that would require mandatory labeling of foods containing ingredients derived from genetic engineering are unworkable and not necessary based on science-based regulation of genetically engineered foods under the Coordinated Framework for Regulation of Biotechnology. NASDA members voted at our annual meeting in February 2015 to encourage bipartisan legislation to reaffirm the U.S Food and Drug Administration as the authority on the health, safety, and nutrition of foods derived from genetic engineering.

**NASDA Members recognize the need for a national, uniform, and voluntary approach to labeling foods derived from genetic engineering.**

The intricate, highly evolved supply chains of our nation's food manufacturers will be crippled by a patchwork of state and local laws. From farm to table, every link of the supply chain will have to be altered. As more states pass these laws with our own peculiarities, the more complex the system will become and the higher prices will go. Farmers will have to segregate crops, food companies will have to build new plants and buy additional warehouse space, plants will have to hire new quality control inspectors and states will have to hire new enforcement officers. In the end, consumers will have to pay for it all. A Cornell University [study](#) released earlier this year found that the tab may be as much as \$500 more per year for the average American family. The variety of exempted products from these

different bills will also cause additional confusion in the American consumer's purchasing behavior.

NASDA supports the bill, including re-affirmation of the U.S. FDA's authority for safety of genetically engineered foods and the federal pre-emption to disallow states from implementing mandatory labeling laws. NASDA also supports adoption of the Manager's Amendment to the bill which would make clarifications that the preemption applies only to the sale of GE plants for use in food. Without this fix, there would be a non-science based and damaging precedent for the labeling of livestock products where consumers will be faced with potentially misleading marketing labels on nutritionally important meat and dairy products.

NASDA appreciates the House of Representatives for taking a lead and putting forth a solution for this critical issue. We ask for your favorable vote for this important legislation. Please contact Amanda Culp on NASDA's staff at (202) 296-9680 or [amanda@nasda.org](mailto:amanda@nasda.org) if we can be of any assistance to you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Enright", with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Scott Enright**

Chairperson, Hawaii Department of Agriculture  
President, NASDA